



## **Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council**

*Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair  
Councilor Jesse M. Adams  
Councilor Maureen T. Carney  
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge*

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street  
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building  
Northampton, MA**

Meeting Date: April 21, 2016

1. At 7:36 p.m. Vice-Chair Jesse M. Adams called the meeting to order.
2. Roll Call: Present at the meeting were committee members Adams, LaBarge and Carney. Committee member Murphy was absent. Also present at the meeting were Councilors Sciarra, O'Donnell, Bidwell, Dwight, and Klein.
3. Approve Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of April 7, 2016; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).
4. Quarterly financial report of the General Fund and Enterprise Funds: Reports were distributed to the committee members and the City Council. An overview was given by Finance Director Susan Wright. The reports include information for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the fiscal year (July 2015 – March 2016). The MUNIS reports included revenues and expenditures, and general enterprise funds. Director Wright reports that everything is going along as budgeted and there are no surprises. There are no negatives in the report, but there quite a few positives.

On the revenue report, Director Wright pointed out two areas of positive revenues: hotel/motel tax and meals tax. Regarding the meals tax, the reports show that the City is approx. \$58,000 ahead of where it was for the same time period last year. This is about a 12 % increase over the previous year. Regarding hotel/motel taxes, the reports show that the City is about \$81,000 ahead of where it was for the same time period last year. This is about an 18% increase over the previous year. Regarding parking revenue (including receipts collected from parking lots, garages, meters, and parking passes), parking receipts are up \$104,000 over the same time period last year. This is not due to higher taxes or fees. Parking revenue increases, for example are as a result of parking longer where fees are collected. Building permits have brought in \$252,000 so far this year. During the same time period last year building permit revenue was at \$194,000. This shows that the revenue is up 30% in this area.

Regarding snow and ice expenditures this year, there is still money left in the budget. So far this year expenditures are about \$500,000 less than this time last year.

All of the enterprise funds are on track as expected.

5. Financial Orders
  - A. **16.051 A Financial Order authorizing the payment of two previous year bills from the DPW**

Mayor Narkewicz explained that this order is coming before the Finance Committee because state law requires that if a bill needs to be paid from a previous fiscal year, then City Council

must approve the payment. The two bills included in this order were for truck and trailer parts and wrapping materials. The Mayor believes that the original bills were misplaced.

Councilor Carney moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).

**B. 16.052 Financial Order regarding gift donation of \$10,000 for Improvements to City Council Chambers**

Mayor Narkewicz reported that D.A. Sullivan has made a generous donation to the City for upgrading of the City Council Chambers. The money will be used to replace the desks. Mark Sullivan has been a long time Planning Board member. The City is allowed to accept the gift in accordance with state law and the Council will need to also approve the expenditure.

Councilor Dwight commented that he has spoken to Central Services Director David Pomerantz about the upgrades. The desks will be acquired from Andy's Oak Shop which will be getting the desks from an Amish cabinet making company. Councilor Dwight suggested that pictures of the insides of the desk be taken for the historic value. Many past users of the desks have signed an inside drawer and some signature date back to the 1920s.

Councilor O'Donnell asked how often people making gifts to the City come before the City to conduct City business. Mayor Narkewicz explained that given the line of work for the D.A. Sullivan firm, he is sure that they have come to the Building Inspector to request building permits. When issues arise on the Planning Board involving the D.A. Sullivan Company, Mark Sullivan must recuse himself from discussions and votes. Councilor O'Donnell recognizes the value of the generous gift; however, he will not support the order for personal reasons on first reading.

Councilor Adams asked if the company was seeking any recognition, Mayor Narkewicz responded, "No".

Councilor Carney moved to send the order forward to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).

**C. 16.053 Financial Order To appropriate \$46,798 from free cash to match funds for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Urban Forestry**

Mayor Narkewicz explained that Northampton was one of a handful of communities selected in this round to receive the challenge grant. The grant requires the City to put up matching funds. This is something that the Public Shade Tree Commission has been working on.

Councilor Carney moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).

6. New Business: Councilor Adams announced that there will be a Committee on Finance Meeting on April 26, 2016 @ 5:00 pm in City Council Chambers. The Committee will hear the preliminary report from the 2015 Year-End Audit conducted by Scanlon and Associates, LLC.
7. Adjourn: At 7:56 p.m. Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).

*Prepared by:*

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